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Warning to Parents: Act Now to Prevent Synthetic Drug Poisonings

DES MOINES – Governor Terry Branstad has proclaimed Monday, March 5th, as *Take Five Iowa Day*, a day for Iowans to talk with children about the importance of living drug free. In observance of *Take Five Iowa Day*, the Partnership at DrugFreeIowa.org is joining with the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy in calling on parents to set aside a few minutes to talk with their young sons and daughters about making healthy choices to prevent drug abuse.

"It's timely now for parents to talk with children about drugs, especially in light of increasing reports of Iowa teenagers using new synthetic drugs, and many of them requiring hospital treatment," said Peter Komendowski, President of the Partnership at DrugFreeIowa.org. "Research shows that key adult influencers who ask questions, set boundaries and monitor friends can reduce the odds of teenagers ever using drugs."

Studies by the Partnership at DrugFree.org repeatedly show that teenagers who learn about the risks of drugs through ongoing dialog with parents at home are up to 50 percent less likely to ever use drugs.

"The growing number of Iowa teenagers using potentially dangerous synthetic products and misusing prescription medicines requires a redoubling of efforts to talk with our children about drugs," said Dale Woolery, Interim Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy. "While still addressing the importance of avoiding underage drinking and other more established drugs of abuse, we need to broaden our message to youth to say: Don't take anything if you don't know what it is, if it's not prescribed for you, or if it's not from a trusted adult."

"*Take Five* is a reminder that anytime is a good time to talk with children about drugs," said Komendowski. "We urge Iowa parents to take advantage of easy-to-use age-appropriate tips in *Take Five* school flyers and at www.DrugFreeIowa.org for help in what to say and how to say it." As part of the Partnership's *Take Five* program, tip sheets for parents were sent home to parents of Iowa 5th graders.

For more information about the Partnership at DrugFreeIowa.org, or to download a copy of its *Take Five* tips for parents, go to www.DrugFreeIowa.org.